



NATIONAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
AT SAFAL PARTNERS

Special Education: Supporting Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools



September 15, 2015

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Context
- Equity at Scale
- Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools
Students with Special Needs
- Q&A

Introducing our Presenters



Paul T. O'Neill

Partner, Cohen Schneider & O'Neill, LLP
President & Founder, Tugboat Education
Services Co-Founder & Fellow, National
Center for Special Education in Charter
Schools Adjunct Professor, Teachers College,
Columbia University



Bethany Gross

Senior Research Analyst &
Research Director
Center for Reinventing Public Education
(CRPE)

About the National Charter School Resource Center

www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov



- Funded through the U.S. Department of Education
- Makes accessible high-quality resources to support the charter school sector

Toolkit: District-Charter Collaboration

A user's guide on what makes a collaboration successful. Both parties have a lot to gain by partnering up to meet common goals



What Are Charter Schools?

Charter schools are in 42 states, nearly 25 years old, and over 7% of k-12 students in the US are enrolled in one. Here is an explanation of this important trend



State Resources for Charters

Need help finding information about charter schools in your state? Click above for a map that will guide you to resources and contact information for each state



Most Popular Charter Resources

Click above for a list of our top resources. These resources include everything from reports on special education to documentaries on successful charters

Webinar Logistics

- Please use the chat feature to post questions
- Questions will be answered during Q&A
- Use chat for help with technical issues
- Webinar recordings will be available on the NCSRC website later today (www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov)
- We will ask you to fill out a survey on the webinar during Q&A

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- **Context**
- Equity at Scale
- Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools
Students with Special Needs
- Q&A

Context (slide 1 of 5)

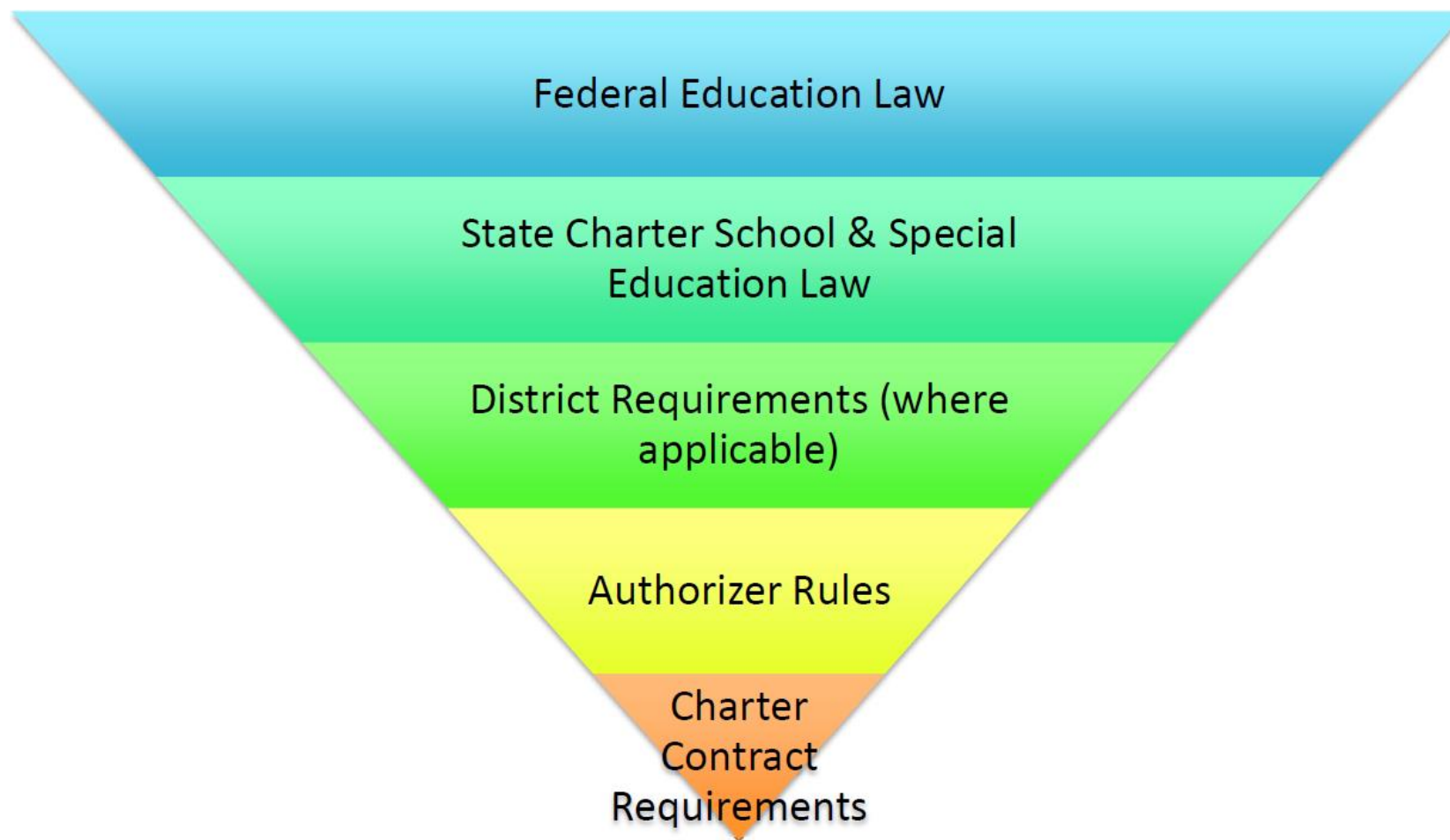
- 43 states, plus the District of Columbia, have charter schools in operation.
- Approximately 6.4 million students – 13.1% of the student population between the ages of six and 21 – receive special education and related services in public schools every year.
- 95% of these students are enrolled in neighborhood schools.
- From school year 1999–2000 to 2011–2012, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools increased from 0.3 million to 2.1 million students.
- Approximately 10.5% of the students enrolled in charter schools have a disability that qualifies them for special education and related services.

Context (slide 2 of 5)

- Charter schools are public schools and as such have the **opportunity and obligation to serve all students** – including those with disabilities.
- **State laws allocate authority** over special education and other areas.
 - Some charter schools are Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
 - Some are schools within a district LEA.
 - State chartering boards or other independent Authorizers may be LEAs.
- The **LEA is primarily responsible** for ensuring that special education is provided.
- The LEA must provide a **full spectrum of placement options** for students.
- Many state laws provide flexibilities to charter schools – more autonomy in exchange for more accountability – but **federal laws still apply**.

Context (slide 3 of 5)

Layers of Authority



Context (slide 4 of 5)

Federal Authorities

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq.
- IDEA Regulations: 34 C.F.R. 300 et seq.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: 29 U.S.C. § 792
- Americans with Disabilities Education Act: 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.
- 504 & ADA Regulations: 34 C.F.R. 104

Context (slide 5 of 5)

- It is challenging to generalize about how special education factors play out in charter schools – they are **defined by variety**.
- Special education is more of a **spectrum** than a singular application; so are charter schools.
- But we can see **commonalities, trends, shared concerns and opportunities** for serving students with disabilities in charter schools.
- The **NCSRC** is focused on this work.
- With recent research in this area, we have identified key factors and opportunities to **issues impacting students with disabilities in charter schools**.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Context
- **Equity at Scale**
- Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools
Students with Special Needs
- Q&A

NCSECS - Equity at Scale (slide 1 of 2)

- In the early days of chartering, most schools were small and independent.
- Now, many schools are part of larger networks, united by a common program and often by a partnership with a management organization.
 - Charter Management Organization = CMO (non-profit)
 - Education Management Organization = EMO (for-profit)
 - Education Service Provider = ESP (generic term for either)
- Networks have scale, expertise, and resources to impact quality and options for special education in charter schools.
- State laws are generally silent on the role such organizations can play; some ESPs have begun exploring the possibility of network collaboration.

NCSECS - Equity at Scale (slide 2 of 2)

➤ Modest Offerings

- Shared resources
- Academic model
- Professional development offerings

➤ More Innovative Offerings

- Satellite classrooms (serving students in multiple schools within network)
- Mega-networking (linked networks sharing practices)
- Services beyond network (to district; other networks)
- Network LEA

Final Thoughts

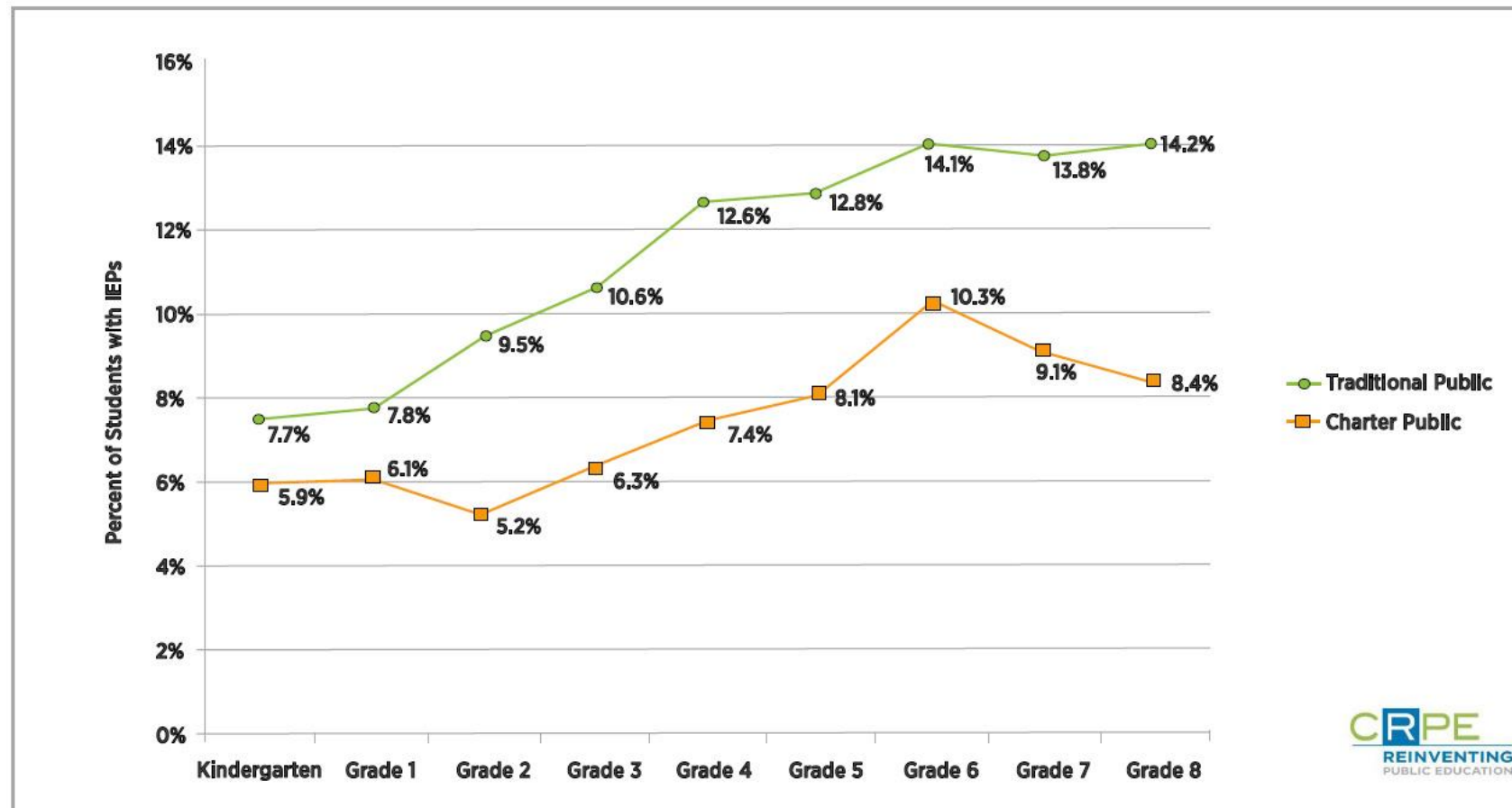
- This is a challenging area and will continue to be so – equity and choice are values that do not always easily align.
- Many signs of recent progress
 - Increased national focus on these issues.
 - National Alliance for Public Charter Schools model charter school law Version 2 to include much richer language around special education.
 - Many schools searching for ways to serve more students with moderate to severe disabilities.
 - Networks stretching to use their scale to offer stronger special education options.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Context
- Equity at Scale
- **Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools
Students with Special Needs**
- Q&A

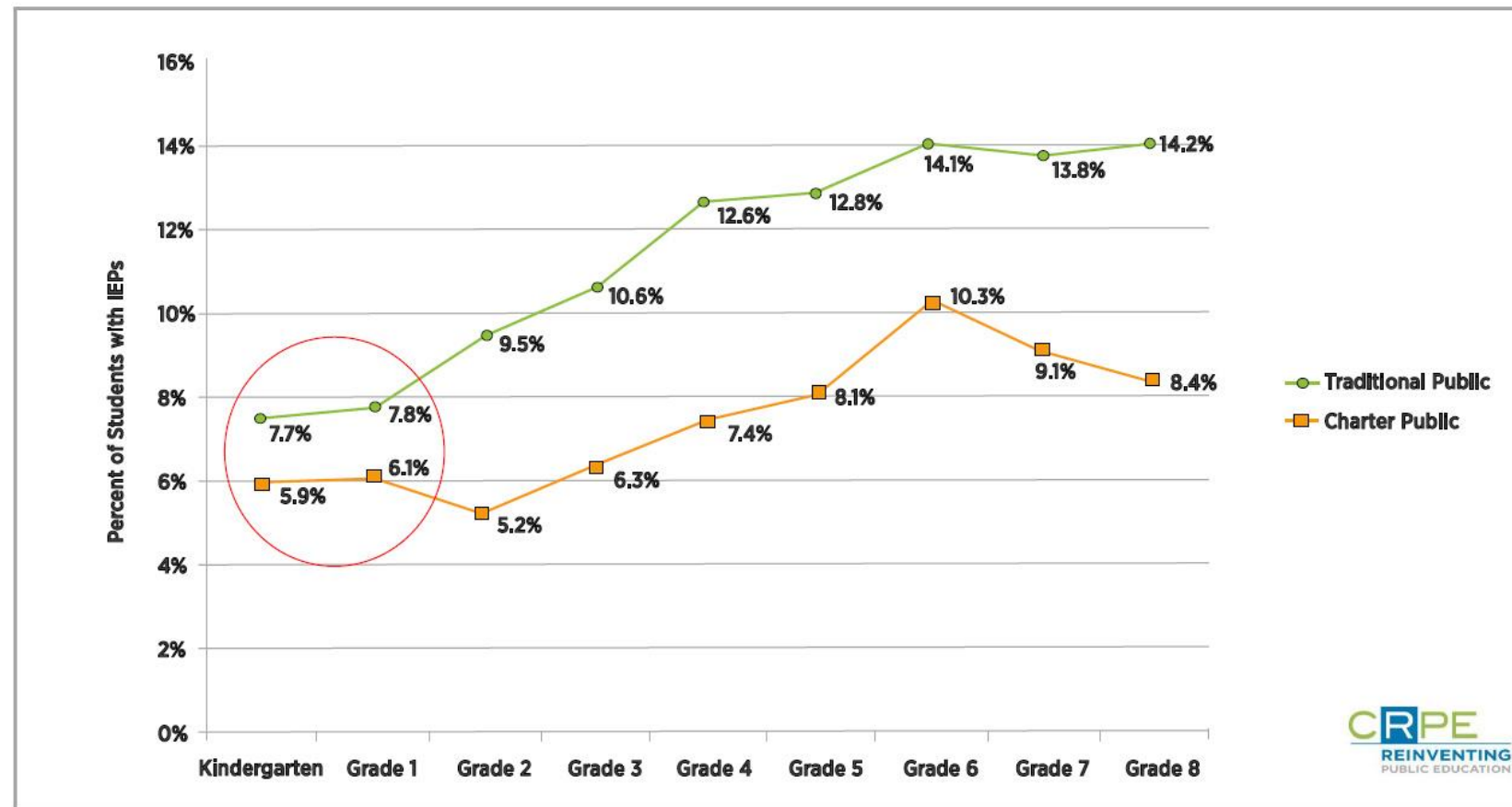
Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools Students with Special Needs (slide 1 of 5)

An Enrollment Gap from Day One
Special Education Enrollment by Grade in Denver Schools



Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools Students with Special Needs (slide 2 of 5)

An Enrollment Gap from Day One
Special Education Enrollment by Grade in Denver Schools



Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools Students with Special Needs (slide 3 of 5)

Students with Special Needs are
Less Likely to Apply to Charter Schools

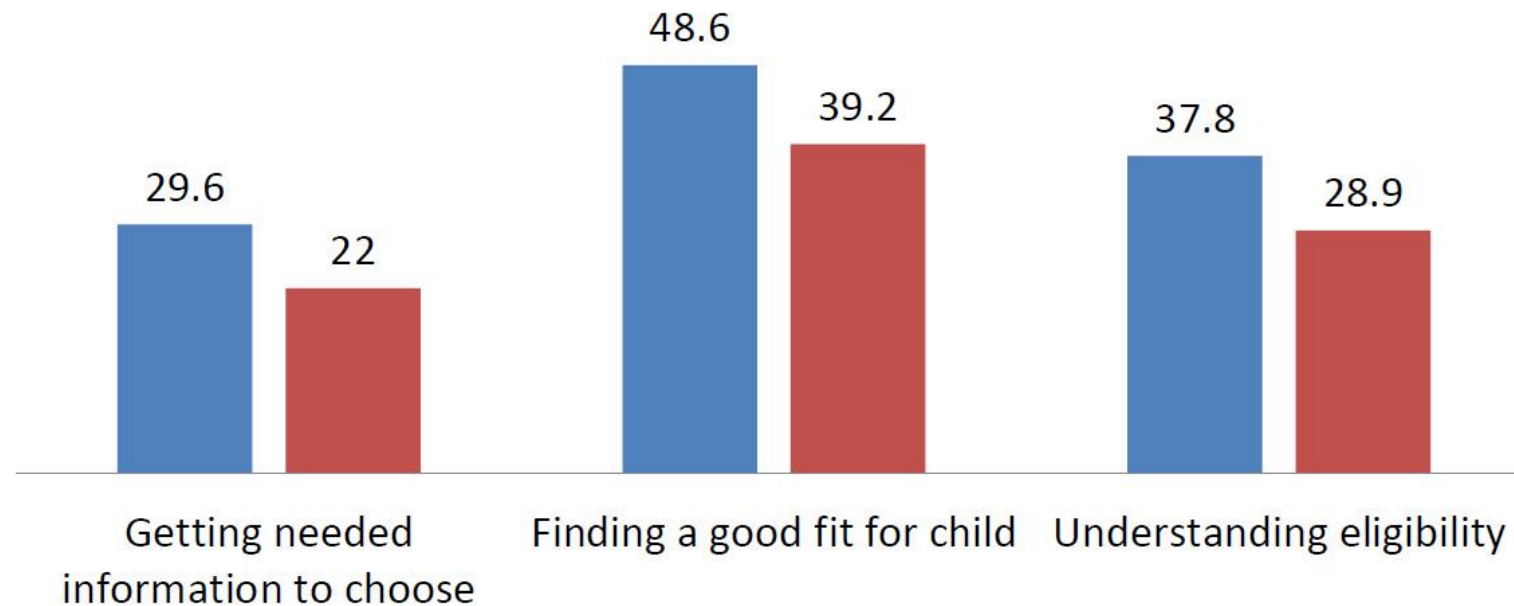
Of Denver students
who **apply to a**
charter school
5.6
have an IEP

Of Denver students
who **apply to no**
charter school
7.8
have an IEP

Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools Students with Special Needs (slide 4 of 5)

Barriers to Choosing? Parents Reported Difficulty in Choosing

■ Enrolling a child with an IEP ■ Enrolling a child for general education only



Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools Students with Special Needs (slide 5 of 5)

Strategies to Improve Access

- Information tools
 - Overall approach to special education
 - Available services and accommodations
 - Outcomes for students with special needs
- Opportunities to meet with teachers prior to applying
- More personalized support in identifying and choosing among options

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Context
- Equity at Scale
- Understanding the Entry Gap for Charter Schools
Students with Special Needs
- Q&A

Questions & Answers

Please submit any questions in the chat box.

Discussion

Do national trends and local examples resonate with your experiences? (Provide examples in chat box)

What factors do you see influencing special education in charter schools? (Answers in chat box)

What issues would you like to see future research efforts examine? (Answers in chat box)

Links to Presenter Resources

NCSECS

www.ncsecs.org

[Educating Students with Disabilities](#)

[Equity at Scale](#)

CRPE

www.crpe.org

[Understanding the Charter School
Special Education Gap: Evidence from
Denver, Colorado](#)

[Special Education in Charter Schools:
What We've Learned and What We Still
Need to Know](#)

Links to Additional Resources

The U.S. Department of Education (Charter School Program)

www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/index.html

The National Charter School Research Center

www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

www.publiccharters.org

NCSRC Resources (1 of 2)

➤ Reports & White Papers

- [District-Charter Collaboration](#)
- [Student Achievement in Charter Schools: What the Research Shows](#)
- [An Analysis of the Charter School Facility Landscape](#)
- [Finding Space: Charters in District Facilities](#)
- [Charter Schools and Military Communities: A Toolkit](#)
- [Legal Guidelines for Educating English Learners in Charter Schools](#)
- [Engaging English Learner Families in Charter Schools](#)

➤ Newsletters

- [Student Achievement in Charter Schools: What the Research Shows](#)
- [Serving English Language Learners and Families](#)
- [Charter Schools Serving Military Families](#)
- [English Learners in Charter Schools: Key Opportunities for Engagement and Integration](#)
- [Finding Space: Analyzing Charter School Facilities](#)

➤ Webinars

- [SEA Webinar: Early Childhood Learning in Charter Schools](#)
- [General Webinar: Serving English Language Learners and Families](#)
- [Credit Enhancement Webinar: Evaluating Charter School Performance](#)
- [Credit Enhancement Webinar: Evaluating Charter School Performance During the Transition to Common Core](#)
- [Credit Enhancement Webinar: Recent Developments in CSP Guidance](#)
- [Credit Enhancement Webinar: Authorizer Collaboration](#)
- [Credit Enhancement Webinar: Collaboration to Enhance Facility Financing](#)
- [Credit Enhancement Webinar: May 2015 Workshop Preparation](#)
- [SEA Webinar: Weighted Lotteries](#)
- [SEA Webinar: Data Management Tools for Risk Based Monitoring](#)

NSCRC Resources (2 of 2)

➤ Case Studies

- [Two Rivers Public Charter School \(SWD\)](#)
- [Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School \(FACTS\)](#)
- [Alma del Mar \(EL\)](#)
- [El Sol \(EL\)](#)
- [Brooke Roslindale Charter \(SWD\)](#)

➤ Master Classes

- [Emerging Legal Issues](#)
- [Federal Funding Opportunities](#)

Contact Us

mukta@safalpartners.com

info@safalpartners.com

Visit Us

www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov

Follow Us

[@safalpartners](https://twitter.com/safalpartners)

Subscribe to the NCSRC Newsletter

tinyurl.com/nscrc-subscribe

Thank You!

